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# THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

October 1993

Vol. 47 No. 2



University of Illinois  
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

University of Illinois Press



★ "A dynamic look at one of the most exciting and dangerous periods in U.S. history."\*

# COWBOYS, INDIANS, AND GUNFIGHTERS

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By Albert Marrin

Illustrated with full-color and black-and-white photographs



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# T H E B U L L E T I N

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OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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#### EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

*	Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R	Recommended.
Ad	Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M	Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR	Not recommended.
SpC	Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR	A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

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#### STAFF

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Deborah Stevenson, Assistant Editor (DS)

Kathryn Jennings, Reviewer (KJ)

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## THE BIG PICTURE

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### *Owl in Love*

by Patrice Kindl

The title, believe it or not, is self-explanatory. Our protagonist, Owl, has a terrible crush on her science teacher; it's a particular problem for her because she's a wereowl—attending school during the day and transforming at will to hunt prey at night—so that her seemingly adolescent longing for Mr. Lindstrom is actually the foundation of the owl's mating-bond for life. Owl is fortunate in her family, town eccentrics cozily familiar with the avian tendency in their genes ("There are birds of prey in my family going back hundreds of years, one every two or three generations"), who enjoy the juicy rabbits she sometimes brings back for their dinner and are shocked that Owl's love might not be returned, or even legal.

Owl gradually falls into a comradeship with Dawn, a chatty, sunny schoolmate to whom she turns for help when her nightly vigils at Mr. Lindstrom's house reveal an unstable boy hiding in the backyard. Owl thinks the boy, whom she names Houle, is a wereowl like her, and she determines to keep him warm and safe in Dawn's garage. Houle proves to be Mr. Lindstrom's son, considered disturbed because of his natural wereowl tendency to eat rodents raw, and Owl's crush on the father turns out to be a foreshadowing of her enduring owl bond with the son, now liberated by the knowledge of his true barn-owl self.

Owl's narration is austere and disdainful; her matter-of-factness about predation, unfamiliarity with average human ways, and anxiety about her inner turmoil are extremely funny (she nearly makes a dreadful faux pas by eating, rather than petting, Dawn's proffered hamster on her first visit to her friend's house). Her owl-world of night and flight is also harsh, beautiful, and mystical. Fantasies so often carry the weight of their own making, forcing readers to acknowledge brilliant architecture rather than taking them to another world. In *Owl in Love*, the fantasy world is depicted so that the reader experiences what the narrator does; Kindl's fiction creates a convincing impression of an existence we would otherwise never know. It's good to see "what if" taken to the extreme while still being treated with respect. The author, a superb writer, combines the diverse strands well; even the initially confusing narrative shifts to Houle's anguished point of view become clear. Owl struggles with conflicting needs as owl and human, child and adult, while asking questions ("How does one detect malice behind a smooth, smiling, pink face?") not unique to wereowls and familiar to any reader trying to negotiate the complex human world. Her relationship with loyal, smarter-than-she-seems Dawn is quite touching, as Dawn clearly understands more about Owl than Owl realizes and meets her more than halfway in a friendship Owl is only beginning to understand.

So for Halloween, try a fantasy rich and strange, haunting and humorous, with the same solid roots in human dynamics that make *The Changeover* so plausible. Light up the jack o' lanterns at twilight, watch the night birds swoop, and enjoy *Owl in Love* out loud with the local thirteen-year-olds.

*Deborah Stevenson, Assistant Editor*



## NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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ANDERSON, JOAN *Twins on Toes: A Ballet Debut*; illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Lodestar, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-525-67415-2 \$14.99

R Gr. 4-7

Behind the frilly pink mystique of ballet lies another harder mystique of broken bones, blisters, and obsession, and it is that vision of ballet that this book presents. Amy and Laurel are identical twins who have been dancing for ten years; they're studying at the School of American Ballet, hoping for an offer from a professional ballet company, and dancing their hearts and limbs out in the meantime. This isn't *A Very Young Dancer*—there's no glossary, and explanation of unfamiliar terms is rare. It is, however, an absorbing look at two girls, professionals consecrated to their art, and at the hard work of endless classes and endless hopes. The photographs are splendid and varied, with the twins sometimes fairy princesses in performance, sometimes elaborate shapes cleanly curving in practice room space, and sometimes teenagers seemingly knitted together from strain and bones; one playful but moody picture shows the twins, looking more Audrey Hepburn-ish than ever, peering into a mirror as they apply makeup before a performance: it takes a moment to figure out which of the four girls are reflections. The overall picture is alluring, beautiful, and a little scary (the twins and their mentors casually drop utterances such as "We live to dance," "Always dance as if it were the last thing you were going to do," "You have to listen, you have to want it. Be starving") in a way that makes ballet all the more magnetic. Amy and Laurel are rewarded with a contract with the Miami Ballet; young novitiates who hope to follow them, if only from their armchairs, will find this book rewarding as well. DS

ANTLE, NANCY *Tough Choices: A Story of the Vietnam War*; illus. by Michele Laporte. Viking, 1993 [64p] (Once Upon America)  
ISBN 0-670-84879-4 \$12.99

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-6

Samantha has been worried about her oldest brother Mitch, who's coming home after more than a year's duty in Vietnam. But now that he's home, and different somehow, Sam is upset because her other brother Emmett has become a fervent anti-war activist and can't seem to keep from baiting Mitch. Although the debate is rarely subtle ("Baby killer!" shouts one protestor at Mitch; "You're nothing but a bunch of dirty hippies," replies his mom), the book is an efficient vehicle for the



discussion of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. However, there's not enough fictional development. We have no idea, for example, of where Sam and her family live, and her statement that "my dad died before I was born" begs further elucidation, but that's it for any mention of Dad. Still, there's little for this reading level about the war, and kids will also empathize with the family tensions brought home by headlines. RS

ASHABRANNER, BRENT *Still a Nation of Immigrants*; illus. with photographs by Jennifer Ashabranner and others. Cobblehill, 1993 131p  
ISBN 0-525-65130-6 \$15.99 R Gr. 7-10

Ashabranner updates his excellent series of books about immigration (*The New Americans*, etc.) with this look at the issue, and the people it affects, in the late '80s and into the '90s. While he acknowledges problems (although saying that the presence of Vietnamese fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico "caused tension in a few places at first" seems a bit understated), particularly in regard to illegal immigration, the book is governed by the argument that immigration is a good thing for the country. The text is peppered with success stories of immigrants who have made successful lives for themselves and enriched the communities they live in. These stories add anecdotal interest to the argument (as do black-and-white photos of variable quality), and well-documented statistics drawn from census data and surveys add evidential weight. A bibliography and index are included. RS

AVI *City of Light, City of Dark*; illus. by Brian Floca. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 192p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08650-X \$15.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06800-5 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 4-6

Ever the experimenter, Avi, along with artist collaborator Brian Floca, here uses a comic-book format to tell a comic-book tale about the forces of good and evil battling above, below, and upon the island of Manhattan. Long ago, a strange race called the Kurbs leased Manhattan to humans, on the condition that each year a ritual of finding the POWER and returning it to a place designated by the Kurbs be carried out. Otherwise, "the Kurbs will take their Island back." The "Ritual Cycle of Acknowledgment" is carried out by a matrilineal line of women, but the cycle has been foiled by the evil designs of Thor Underton, who plots to steal the POWER (currently residing in an ordinary-looking subway token) from its current keeper, a meter maid named Asterel. While the story has plenty of derring-do and complications, it's over-prolonged and unmenacing. Unlike the classic Manhattan comic *Batman*, there's little genuine darkness here, and the black-and-white cartoons are often blandly illustrative, with too many panels, and only occasionally provide the dramatic sweep the words need. There's a healthy dose of feminism and a multicultural cast to give a fresh slant, but the newsstand originals have the real power. RS

BANKS, LYNNE REID *The Magic Hare*; illus. by Barry Moser. Morrow, 1993 49p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10896-2 \$14.93  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10895-4 \$15.00 R Gr. 3-5

Although the hare is a folkloric trickster figure, these ten short stories are original

and contemporary, if fabular, in their morals: "Well, I don't know much about queens, but personally I don't like talking to anyone who doesn't say please. And thank you," said the hare very reasonably." The hare's encounter with the spoiled queen (rendered realistically repulsive in Moser's portrait of her) is followed by his confrontation with or transformation of a shy flower (a romantic blue, tipped with moonlight), an orphan (glamorously depicted), two giants (grotesque), a vampire (scary), a prince with hiccups (foolish), a dragon (brilliantly hued but stupid), a witch who defines good magic as black (she's black herself), a penurious king (Moser himself, parodied), and the hare's own magic powers, which don't seem to work on the moon (hare-ish astronaut in spacesuit). The stories vary in cleverness of plot, but the didactics are consistently balanced by offhand twists of humor. With an occasional pause for showing Moser's illustrations, these will make a ready sequence of readalouds to spur kids on with their own creative writing. BH

BERNHARD, EMERY, ad. *How Snowshoe Hare Rescued the Sun: A Tale from the Arctic*; illus. by Durga Bernhard. Holiday House, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-8234-1043-9 \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs.

A simpler picture book, both narratively and visually, than the Bernhards' *Spotted Eagle and Black Crow* (BCCB 6/93), this is a Siberian Yuit tale (adapted from a collection by James Riordan) about the trickster hero Snowshoe Hare, who retrieves the sun from greedy demons that have stolen it. While Bear gets distracted by food and Wolf by a warm den, Hare fulfills Snowy Owl's prediction by traveling steadily, slipping into the demons' cave, kicking over the cauldron holding the sun, rolling it along the snow, and finally kicking it up into the sky, where it makes the sun, moon, and Milky Way stars. The highly patterned plot and illustrations are well suited to each other, with rounded organic shapes and cool earth tones dominating each scene of the unfolding drama. The demons are stylized with humor and the animals toylike without becoming cute. Color-contrasting borders are sometimes a bit much for the symmetrically restrained gouache compositions, but overall this will make an impressive companion for tales such as Gerald McDermott's *Raven* (BCCB 6/93) in storytelling sessions with younger children. BH

BIAL, RAYMOND *Frontier Home*; written and illus. with photographs by Raymond Bial. Houghton, 1993 [40p]  
ISBN 0-395-64046-6 \$15.95  
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 4-6

Precise full-color photographs of pioneer implements, livestock, and homes accompany a description of the life of the American settler. Missing from the book is a glossary of terms, and unfortunately there are plenty of unfamiliar words to confuse the reader. For example, one is instructed to "imagine traveling in a Conestoga wagon"; settlers "would have a 'raisin' to stack heavy timbers"; and the tools used for building a cabin are mentioned in the text but not identified in a nearby photograph. The lack of captions for the photos occasionally poses a problem when several unknown implements are shown together. On the other hand, this is a well-written portrait of pioneer life ("If they weren't making or mending clothes, women were busy scrubbing them with homemade soap"). *Frontier Home* will be useful as a readaloud for a class that is studying pioneers and has already been introduced to the period. KJ

BLUME, JUDY *Here's to You, Rachel Robinson*. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 196p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08651-8 \$14.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06801-3 \$14.95 R Gr. 5-8

This companion to *Just As Long As We're Together* (BCCB 9/87) is narrated by Rachel (best friend to the heroine in the previous book) whose seventh-grade travails range from worrying about keeping her friends and having a crush on an older man, to, most seriously, dealing with the return home of her troubled older brother Charles, who's been expelled from boarding school. This is no ordinary sibling rivalry: Charles is aggressively, verbally cruel to both his sisters and his parents, eventually landing the whole family into therapy. Blume is honest and fair about contemporary family life, passing out neither blame nor sermons. She's realistic, too, about what kids can get away with, whether it's Rachel's older sister Jessica illicitly borrowing Mom's slinky black dress for the prom or Charles smoking pot in his room. Junior-high school stories are a dime a dozen these days, but Blume remains one of the best practitioners of the genre—thoughtful, gently funny, and empathetic. RS

BOSSE, MALCOLM *Deep Dream of the Rain Forest*. Farrar, 1993 179p  
ISBN 0-374-31757-7 \$15.00 R Gr. 7-12

An ambitious adventure story from the author of *Captives of Time* (BCCB 1/88) is set in a Borneo jungle during the 1920s, when east and west come face to face in the form of two strong men and a lame young woman with spiritual vision. Harry Windsor is the orphaned son of brave British colonials who have traditionally explored, fought, and died for their country. Bayang is a young Iban warrior who has had a great dream, which, if he follows it, will give him power to lead his people. Appearing in the dream and helping him interpret it in real life is Duck Foot, ostracized because of a birth defect but wise in the ways of Iban tradition. The fate of these three characters becomes intertwined when a warring group of headhunters attacks Harry's uncle's expedition. The setting up of the situation takes some time and exposition, but once the central characters begin their dangerous journey toward understanding the dream and each other, the action is nonstop and compelling. Although Harry needn't have been such a stock prototype and his conversion so predictable, both the Iban characters are less representative and more individualized, centering the book fictionally and layering the story's conventional plot and exotic setting. BH

BRETT, JAN *Christmas Trolls*; written and illus. by Jan Brett. Putnam, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-399-22507-2 \$15.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

Treva's got more *Trouble with Trolls* (BCCB 12/92); this time, it's a pair of naughty young ones who've enlisted a hedgehog to steal the Christmas ornaments and treats from Treva's house so they can experience Christmas for themselves. Tracking them down to their treehouse, Treva teaches the trolls the true meaning of Christmas, even though it means giving up her treasured toy horse in the process. It's a sweet story, but kids will be more interested in the myriad details found in Brett's paintings of Treva's Scandinavian home and the trolls' little house. The drawing and coloring is a bit relentless, with a flatness of perspective that makes the pictures crowded and busy; still, the seasonal mood is omnipresent, with snow and evergreens providing Christmassy contrast with the cozy interiors. RS

**BRUCHAC, JOSEPH** *Fox Song*; illus. by Paul Morin. Philomel, 1993 [32p]  
ISBN 0-399-22346-0 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs.

Jamie lies in bed remembering her Abenaki great-grandmother, who spent time in the woods showing her the ways of wildlife, telling her stories, and teaching her traditions of Native American craft and reverence for nature. With the potential for becoming nostalgic, this is instead carried by the weight of emotional intensity and action once-removed, as Jamie comes full circle to see the fox her grandmother had promised would appear to remind her of their time together. Morin's woods scenes are painted with the same concentration of color with which Bruchac writes, though the human figures seem photographically stiff compared with the fluidity in the drafting of flora and fauna. Story and art together, however, make a rich combination that will move the adults reading this aloud as much as it does the children who hear it. Mourning, as Jamie's parents realize, is a very private experience, and it will be important to leave listeners some time and space with their own reactions to the book. BH

**BRYAN, ASHLEY, ad.** *The Story of Lightning and Thunder*; adapted and illus. by Ashley Bryan. Karl/Atheneum, 1993 [32p]  
ISBN 0-689-31836-7 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-7 yrs

"A long time ago, I mean a long, long time ago," Thunder was a black ewe (richly patterned with organically rounded designs in Bryan's illustrations) and Lightning was her white lamb (a ram that looks like he just stepped out of the Zodiac). "Ma Sheep Thunder and her son lived in the hut where he was born. . . . You could stop for a chat or to pat or just wave as you walked on by. They watched the flow, the come and the go, of the people from the country, the people from the town. When they tired of looking one way, they could always turn around." With practiced rhythms and internal rhyme that flows unobtrusively with his prose retelling of this Nigerian tale, Bryan applies his rainbow paints to an effervescent depiction of the ram's mischief, which causes him and his mother to be moved farther and farther out from the village center till they're banished to the sky, where he still causes trouble from time to time. "I know somebody like that too, uh-huh, I do, but I'm not saying who." Every young listener who's been tempted to "biff, bam, butt" his way out of trouble will know who, too, and you won't have to say another word. Just read the story over again. BH

**BUTLER, BEVERLY** *Witch's Fire*. Cobblehill, 1993 135p  
ISBN 0-525-65132-2 \$14.99

R Gr. 5-7

Two years ago, Kirsty's mother and sister were killed in the car accident that restricted her to a wheelchair; now her father has remarried and feels that he can make a home again for his daughter, who had been staying with relatives. Kirsty misses her mother and sister and resents her father's refusal to discuss them, and she hates his attention to her little stepsister Pam. And there's something creepy about their new old house: the cat is oddly skittish of parts of it, strange sights are reflected in the window, and neighborhood kids keep describing the previous owner, an old lady now in a nursing home, as a witch. The neighborhood kids are right, and the witch wreaks havoc in the new family as she tries to lure the young girls she needs to sustain her. The story is well-controlled and unthreateningly spooky, and

it avoids sentimentalizing Kirsty's disability and her unhappiness. The book is dedicated to Betty Ren Wright, whose fans are likely to enjoy this book with its briskly moving plot and tough heroine. DS

BYARS, BETSY *McMummy*. Viking, 1993 [176p]

ISBN 0-670-84995-2 \$13.99

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 5-7

The quirky characters here—elfin-faced Mozie Mozer, his friend Batty Batson, a small-time beauty contestant named Valvoline, and a plant mutant that seems to have human and perhaps dangerous propensities—are signature Byars, though the plot seems more of a spoof than a successor to her characteristically fine-tuned seriocomic fiction. Mozie has been put in charge of a greenhouse full of travelling Professor Orloff's experimental "vegetables," one of which compels Mozie's presence with a magnetic attraction that terrifies him. The plant, in turn, seems attracted to Valvoline, who inadvertently gives it a hug during one of Mozie's visits to turn on the sprinkler system. A classic storm destroys the greenhouse; the bean pod escapes, disrupts the beauty pageant to bring Valvoline her lost lucky mustard-seed necklace, and then disintegrates into luminous scraps of green, leaving Mozie with a chance to grieve over this father's death for the first time and with two seed pods from the plant, just like Jack and the Beanstalk. There are lots of story elements here, including Mozie's friendship with Batty, his budding crush on Valvoline, his difficulties with a boy for whom he babysits, his anxiety to please Professor Orloff, his affection for a cat that fell out of an airplane into his yard, his loneliness for his father, and his rapport with his mother. Unfortunately, the fantasy creates an overload and the novel becomes fragmented, though kids will love the individual scenes, which are goodnatured and goofy to the point of slapstick. *Little Shop of Horrors* gets an allusion; *The BFG*'s "human beans" do not. BH

CARRICK, CAROL *Two Very Little Sisters*; illus. by Erika Weihs. Clarion, 1993 [32p]

ISBN 0-395-60927-5 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-9 yrs

A slice of turn-of-the-century Americana tells the story of two sisters from Martha's Vineyard who never grew above four feet tall. Carrick keeps the tone calm and matter-of-fact, explaining that Lucy and Sarah "had never thought of leaving home, but when Barnum asked them to join his troupe, the circus sounded exciting," so they went. Disliking the staring crowds and the term "midget" they encountered with Barnum, they performed for awhile in Wild West shows until that life too grew tiring, so they returned to Martha's Vineyard and ran a teashop there for the rest of their lives. There's no spectacle here: Carrick has wisely depicted Lucy and Sarah as everyday people with family bonds and the need to earn a living rather than as phenomena, which reduces the story's dramatic impact although raising its integrity. Weihs' art, scratchily textured pigments on canvas, gives the scenes lots of freedom—white space as well as a slightly flattened and distant quality. The sisters' diminutive status is not always readily apparent in the illustrations, but Weihs depicts their journey and aging respectfully, making it clear that the sisters have become grown women, not old children. This is a quiet and nicely offbeat read, and there's a historical note appended. DS

CUTLER, JANE *Darcy and Gran Don't Like Babies*; illus. by Susannah Ryan. Scholastic, 1993 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-44587-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-7 yrs

Everybody loves Darcy's brand-new baby brother—her parents, the neighbors, even the dog ignores her in favor of the new little bundle. Darcy does not much care for the kid, and “when someone asked her how she liked the baby, she told them. Pretty soon, no one asked.” Darcy is relieved when her Gran states straightforwardly and with supporting points that she doesn't like babies either (“I don't much like their smell and I don't much like their looks. . . . I don't like all the work they make for everyone”). Darcy and Gran duck out to the park, playing on the swings and slides and teeter-totters where there are no babies as they discuss their attitudes—that Darcy and Gran will like the baby better later on, that deep down both Darcy and Gran probably like the baby now, and that it's okay if they don't enjoy him immediately. This is a crisp and cheering new-baby book: the writing is stylish with some strategic and enjoyable repetition, and the story takes some of the displacement heat off the older sib by making it clear that many respectable people aren't overly fond of infants. Susannah Ryan's line-and-watercolor art is soft and warm with a slightly cartoonish edge that both enlivens and lightens Darcy's scowling face without detracting from the dignity of Gran's bare feet or her splendiferous trip down the slide. Lots of kids are mystified at the fuss about the squalling new creature; this book, particularly if shared with a flinty grandparent, will both justify and reassure them. DS

DUFFEY, BETSY *How to Be Cool in the Third Grade*; illus. by Janet Wilson. Viking, 1993 [80p]

ISBN 0-670-84798-4 \$12.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 2-3

“Coolness was the key to survival in the third grade,” and Robbie York has made a list of all the things he needs to be cool; step one, “Get rid of the name Robbie.” As his first day progresses, he discovers some other essentials for coolness, such as getting his mother to buy him jeans and to stop walking him to the bus stop, and after an unfortunate peek by class bully Bo in the boys' bathroom, Robbie's determined to get rid of his superheroes underwear in favor of plain white briefs. The tone is lightly ironic, with word and sentence repetition serving to further the humor as well as making things easier for struggling new readers, who will certainly identify with Robbie's challenge—and Bo's: in a pat but satisfying conclusion, the boys become friends when Robbie, er, *Rob* is assigned to be a Book Buddy for Bo, er, *Clyde Elmer*. RS

EMBERLEY, MICHAEL *Welcome Back Sun*; written and illus. by Michael Emberley. Little, 1993 32p

ISBN 0-316-23647-0 \$14.95

R 4-7 yrs

“When I came home from school, it was dark. When I went to school, it was dark. It has been this way for months.” The sunless Norwegian winter has seemed endless, and a little girl longs to see the sun. Commemorating an old tale about a girl who crossed the mountains to find the lost sun, this little girl, her family, and the other villagers climb Mount Gausta for a first glimpse of springtime on the



other side. The book could be an interesting twist for bedtime, when children can be anxious about the interminable night, and Emberley's pictures glow with the sympathetic light of candles as well as the cool gray-blues of the night. The drawing is fluid with the cozy rounded shapes of the villagers (dressed in folk costumes, but the story could easily be contemporary) and the sinuous lines of the birch trees. The first appearance of the sun, reflected in the glowing faces of the basking villagers, may not have the drama of Shulevitz's *Dawn*, but it seems a lot warmer, and there's a terrific painting of the girl zipping down the stairs to greet the light that at long last arrives in the valley. RS

EPHRON, DELIA *The Girl Who Changed the World*. Ticknor, 1993 [160p]  
ISBN 0-395-66139-0 413.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 4-7

Violet is ten, and her teenage brother Simon tortures her mercilessly; after he squashes a fly on her head in the middle of her piano recital, she issues a call to arms, and all the younger siblings in the neighborhood band together under Violet's command. Solidarity makes it possible for previously cowed siblings to fight the villainous olders with strategy (mimicking), words (the dreaded "Duh"), props (strategically trained or placed animals, ranging from cats to lizards), and finally with a kidnap plot that subdues Simon and forces the olders to apologize. This is mostly an archly written fantasy of revenge with little basis in reality, but although some of the vengeance is entertaining it's neither fast enough (the beginning is especially slow) nor funny enough for farce, and the characteristics are too broad for much else. Ephron has tapped into a core of rage in younger children, however, and she conveys it in a cheerfully brutal story that they may enjoy. DS

EVANS, SANFORD *Naomi's Geese*. Simon, 1993 179p  
ISBN 0-671-75623-0 \$15.00

R Gr. 5-7

Naomi's initially unimpressed with her family's summer cabin—she misses New York, her ballet lessons, and her friend Judith. The rural quiet begins to appeal to her, however, especially after she finds a pair of Canada geese nesting by the house and forms a connection with them. Interspersed chapters depict the relationship from the geese's point of view as Naomi changes in their eyes from a frightening threat to a familiar source of treats. Although he sometimes strays into anthropomorphism, Evans effectively creates a different world when he depicts the geese's point of view. The story is told quietly and well, with the final environmental twist unexpected but nonetheless logical (the following spring, Naomi must frighten the only surviving bird away from the now-toxic pond) in light of Naomi's subtle maturation. This is a thoughtful summery read with human as well as ornithological appeal. DS

FOX, MEM *Time for Bed*; illus. by Jane Dyer. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-15-288183-2 \$13.95

R 2-5 yrs

Large, delicate watercolor double spreads illustrate Mem Fox's simple chant of baby animals being soothed to sleep by their parents: "It's time for bed, little mouse, little mouse, / Darkness is falling all over the house." Each spread illustrates a variation on the couplet ("It's time for bed, little calf, little calf . . .") and while the overall effect is sweet, it's not sticky, and the rhyming has some nice

surprises: "it's time for bed, little goose, little goose,/ The stars are out and on the loose." The paintings are dramatically designed with a flair that recalls Nancy Tafuri's work, but Dyer's pictures are warmer and engagingly detailed in their attention to the silky blonde hair on a dog and pup, or the hazy trees in the gloaming behind a mare and foal. The twinkly little five-point stars in the night are a clichéd touch, but the parent-and-baby pairs, closing with a human mother and child, are attentively focused in what could easily become a popular "last call" bedtime book. RS

FREEDMAN, RUSSELL *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*. Clarion, 1993 198p  
ISBN 0-89919-862-7 \$17.95 illus. with photographs R\* Gr. 6-12

To many, Eleanor Roosevelt embodied the spiritual stature of a saint, or, more accurately, of someone like Mahatma Gandhi. "No one seeing her could fail to be moved," said an observer. "She gave off light, I cannot explain it better." This seems to have been such a commonly shared sentiment that it cannot fail to dominate Freedman's latest biography (see his earlier *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, BCCB 12/90), though he does a meticulous job of grounding her slowly acquired strength in the facts of her childhood insecurity and does not neglect the anger she inspired in politicians who considered her a meddling do-gooder. Especially well balanced here are the parallel stories of Eleanor's political development and her personal relationships (including the bitter blow of Franklin's affairs), except that Freedman does not mention the recent controversy about her alleged lesbian attachments. Emerging most clearly is the sustained strength of her nurturant vision, beginning with her concern for women's rights and extending to tireless activity on behalf of those oppressed by poverty or prejudice everywhere. That her nearly superhuman efforts must have generated in part from her own oppression as an orphaned child and circumscribed woman gives credence to both her humility and her energy, readably described in Freedman's engaging narrative and carefully chosen, generously distributed black-and-white historical photographs. A bibliographic essay (and an index) will prove more helpful to researching students than the usual list of books for further reading. BH

GORDON, JOHN *The Burning Baby and Other Ghosts*. Candlewick, 1993 [112p]

ISBN 1-56402-067-3 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-9

Revenge seems to be the strongest motive for the ghosts in this British collection of five original stories. Oh, sure, the boy-ghost in "Death Wish" merely frightens his prospective girlfriend, and one could argue that the ghost of the hanging victim kills the intruder merely out of territorial prerogative in "The Key," but the three best stories in this collection—"The Eels," "Under the Ice," and most of all the title tale—are succulent accounts of ghosts returning to punish those who sent them into the void too early. Gordon is skilled at spare but meaningful characterization as well as the occasional doomsday sentence ("Rosemary was ten when she was smothered by Aunt Jenny and fed to the eels"). Despite some pretty extreme ghostly and human mayhem, the effects, despite the young age of many of the victims, are creepy rather than visceral or livid, so kids will be spooked rather than panicked. Big print and a simple style make this easier reading than Robert Westall, so it's a good offering for older ghost hounds whose tastes are more sophisticated than their reading level. DS

GORDON, RUTH, comp. *Peeling the Onion: An Anthology of Poems*. Zolotow/HarperCollins, 1993 94p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021728-6 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021727-8 \$15.00

R Gr. 7 up

This anthology of sixty-five primarily twentieth-century poems shows more unerring taste than it does binding rationale. Dipping into some of the best work by Octavio Paz, Kenneth Rexroth, Dona Luongo Stein, and others, Gordon casts a cooler tone here than in her first two volumes (BCCB 10/87 and 6/91). There are exceptions, among them Melech Ravitch's gut-wrenching Yiddish poem "Horses," but young adults will find themselves challenged to cross some distance, frequently at a conceptual level rather than an emotional one. A few of the selections are relatively well known (Kenneth Patchen's "The Magical Mouse," for instance) but most of them—including Dilys Laing's poignant "Lost, Stolen, Stayed," Judith Hemschmeyer's humorous recollection "The Dirty-Billed Freeze Footy," Adrienne Rich's ironic "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," and a number of translations—will probably be new discoveries for the target audience. And that's reason enough, whether or not you can figure out a thematic connection, to recommend this for private consumption or sharing out loud. BH

GREENE, CONSTANCE C. *Nora: Maybe a Ghost Story*. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1993 202p

Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-277696-6 \$10.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-276895-5 \$3.95

R Gr. 7-10

Nora's father is thinking of remarrying, and Nora and her ebullient sister Patsy can't stand "The Tooth," as they call his girlfriend. Quiet Nora, the elder of the sisters by eleven months, desperately misses her late mother, but her pain goes unnoticed in the face of Patsy's loud demands for attention. As Nora struggles with her self-definition, becoming friendly with a boy who, Patsy wrongly thinks, has designs on Patsy, she becomes aware of movement and sensation in the house that feel to her like her mother's spirit. The ghost question is never really resolved, but whether Nora's mother comes back or not, the book isn't a ghost story but a human one. The character drama between the two sisters is vividly realized, with Nora's narration touching in its bewilderment, longing, and fear of change. The book is pleasantly open-ended, with no epiphanic acceptance of either loss or a new stepmother, but some of Nora's uncertainty has given way to confidence. The sisterly fireworks provide enough action to keep the thoughtful plot moving right along in this sensitive portrayal of adjustment. DS

HENKES, KEVIN *Owen*; written and illus. by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow, 1993 [24p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11450-4 \$13.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11449-0 \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-6 yrs

Owen, another one of Henkes' endearing little mouse-guys, loves his blanket. "Fuzzy goes where I go," says Owen, but snoopy neighbor Mrs. Tweezers has to put her two cents in: "Isn't he getting a little old for that thing?" She offers his parents three schemes—the blanket fairy, the vinegar trick, and just saying no—but Owen is obdurate in his attachment to his fuzzy favorite friend. The ink and watercolor sketches are funny (Owen playing Captain Plunger with Fuzzy), tender

(Owen hugging Fuzzy in his sleep), and triumphant (Owen parading through the yard after rescuing Fuzzy from the vinegar trick), and in the end Owen's mother provides an ingenious solution to what Henkes has all along assured us was never really a problem. RS

HEST, AMY *Nana's Birthday Party*; illus. by Amy Schwartz. Morrow, 1993 32p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-07498-7 \$14.93  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-07497-9 \$15.00 R 5-8 yrs

Maggie, the narrator, is excited about her traditional birthday visit to Nana's Manhattan apartment, where she and her cousin Brette stay the night in preparation for Nana's birthday celebration the next day. Nana's place is wonderful, with "dark wood floors . . . so shiny you can skim and glide like a skater when you're wearing just socks," and Nana's birthday is a thrill, but Maggie worries that her presents—Maggie-authored stories—are always overshadowed by Brette's artwork. The two girls are inspired to create a project together, depicting a slice of Nana's past, and the book ends with them happy in their accomplishment, anticipating Nana's receiving her present the next day. As usual, Hest's writing is pithy and descriptive, conveying in understandable terms a world mysterious to many child readers (Nana's ceilings, for instance, are "so high you can jump away on any bed and never ever hit your head"), and the extended family is bossy and happy. Kids may, however, find the ending, which doesn't describe Nana's getting her present, somewhat of a cliffhanger. Schwartz's illustrations are particularly joyous, with crazy-quilt blends of pattern lightened by watercolor, restrained by borders, or anchored by smooth expanses of solid colors; the effect is simultaneously exciting and cozy. This is another lively offering in the tradition of *The Purple Coat* (BCCB 2/87). DS

HILL, ELIZABETH STARR *The Banjo Player*. Viking, 1993 196p  
ISBN 0-670-84967-7 \$14.99 Ad Gr. 5-8

A prequel to *The Street Dancers* (BCCB 7/91) and *Broadway Chances* (6/92), this is Grandfather's story, which begins here in the late 1880s with his trip from New York to Mississippi on one of the Orphan Trains. Twelve-year-old Jonathan and an unrelated eight-year-old girl, Eugenie, are adopted by an honest tenant farming couple who treats them well despite the heavy work load. Yet Jonathan yearns to swap places with a boy who's been picked by a New Orleans couple to help with their restaurant. His wish comes about rather too neatly, leading to Jonathan's ultimately fulfilling his dream of becoming a banjo player and performer with a traveling Mississippi river boat troupe. Despite a predictable plot that telescopes in the end to cover a lot of time very quickly—and a considerable amount of historical information that's explained into the fiction—this does have dramatic moments that emphasize characters' development through action rather than exposition. One of these is the understated conversation in which Ma comforts Jonathan: "You went in the garden today. You met a rattler. Now you're sittin' here eatin' honeyed grits." She sipped her coffee. "Remember that." Jonathan's concluding decision, too, has an unexpected twist that compensates for some of the more obvious narrative devices. All in all, kids really will learn a lot from this (the derivation of *limelight*, among other things) and will enjoy it, as well, especially those who've read the first two books. BH

HODGES, MARGARET, ad. *The Hero of Bremen*; illus. by Charles Mikolaycak. Holiday House, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-8234-0934-1 \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs.

Based on an old legend written down in the nineteenth century, this is the story of a crippled cobbler, Hans, who never tires of telling children about the famous knight Roland. When the town becomes too crowded within its walls, a local landowner tricks the citizens with a bargain: they can have as much land as a man can walk around from one city gate to the other—but he chooses Hans to do the walking. Undaunted, Hans sets out at dawn, struggling to do his best until the miraculous intervention of Roland helps him complete the entire route. The end is touching, for though Hans survives the ordeal, he eventually dies and is carried away by Roland “to where the heroes live.” Mikolaycak has kept the art strong and simple, with the figure of Roland a ghostly absence of color contrasted to humans in green, brown, and orange. Roland’s features, too, seem to reflect Hans’ own for the effect of a double, and children will be well served by an alternative to the usually handsome fairy tale protagonist. “Heroes come in all shapes and sizes, and there are many kinds of battle,” says Roland in a message that will help young listeners more than do most paeans to luck, skill, or beauty. Hodges has made a smooth job of narrating here, avoiding sentimentality for a more matter-of-fact tone that will have children chanting “knuckles and knees, knuckles and knees” throughout Hans’ hard journey. BH

HONEYCUTT, NATALIE *Whistle Home*; illus. by Annie Cannon. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 32p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08640-2 \$14.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05490-X \$14.95 R 5-8 yrs

Narrated in the present tense by a girl whose mother is leaving their rural home for the day, this follows the girl, her Aunt Whistle, and her dog Dooley through a day of apple picking and an early evening of mildly anxious anticipation. “‘You need to whistle up Mama,’ I say. ‘She’s not coming back.’” But Aunt Whistle—who “can whistle a groundhog right out of his burrow, . . . a pig from his wallow and a sheep in from clover,” a dog from chasing rabbits, a husband from Kansas, and skunks she wished she hadn’t—knows Mama will come back on her own. Mama does, “bringing hugs and pats and kisses for us, and extras for me.” It’s a reassuring story for kids suffering from inevitable separation anxiety, but it doesn’t turn into bibliotherapy and there’s enough drama in the sweeping, action-packed acrylic paintings to sustain a slice-of-life story. The red pickup truck, the fall colors curving horizontally across impressionistic spreads, the blue of rolling hillsides and figures outlined, and the red zigzag representing the whistle all set the book into motion and keep it rolling along to its gentle end. Babysitters will appreciate this one as bedtime fare, kindergarten teachers would be well advised to crack it out on the first day of fall term, and childcare workers can make of it a special offering for new arrivals. BH

HORENSTEIN, HENRY *How Are Sneakers Made?*; ISBN 0-671-77747-5; *How Is a Bicycle Made?*; ISBN 0-671-77749-1. Each book: written and illus. with photographs by Henry Horenstein. Simon, 1993 32p \$9.95 Ad Gr. 3-5

Two kid-appealing topics are examined in this pair of photodocumentaries. *Sneakers* depicts the making of canvas sneakers from the molding of the rubber sole through

stitching the uppers to packing and shipping; *Bicycles* similarly tracks bikes from factory creation to bike store assembly. Visually the books are a treat, with vivid color and textural contrasts in the photos of rainbows of sneakers and a panoply of exciting machines, as the attractively formatted text floats amid generous white space. Unfortunately the books are much less successful in their explanatory mission: many complicated terms are left unexplained ("extruded" and "hydraulic", for instance) and the pictures, while entertaining, are not easily understood, a particular problem since the text is not sufficiently explanatory alone. In *Sneakers*, why does the rubber, blue in one photo, appear as white in another? What's the extra layer over the fabric uppers as they get cut? When does the fabric get hemmed? Nor is it always clear from the uncaptioned photographs which of the procedures described in the adjoining text is taking place within a particular picture. Overall, these are pretty, if not always helpful, introductions to a couple of manufacturing processes particularly suitable to the young audience. DS

ISAACSON, PHILIP M. *A Short Walk Around the Pyramids and Through the World of Art*. Knopf, 1993 122p illus. with photographs

Library ed. ISBN 0-679-91523-0 \$20.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-81523-6 \$20.00

R\* Gr. 5-9

The author of *Round Buildings, Square Buildings, and Buildings that Wiggle Like a Fish* (BCCB 11/88) here opens up an even broader vista. Lavishly reproduced illustrations are coordinated with a text that is organized into seven chapters: A Simple Form, Sculpture, Color, Images, Photographs, Useful Things, and Towns and Cities. As in the previous book, Isaacson makes no effort at historical sequence, but rather takes conscious leaps across time and place for the sake of dramatic contrast or comparison—an ancient Greek marble sculpture followed by a West African funerary figure, for instance. And again, his perception is acute, his writing fluent, as in the description of April Gornik's work: "The light gives the painting an air of emptiness, as though no one has ever walked in this lonely place." What Isaacson shows us is that creative artistry requires creative analysis. That in itself is a gift to any young reader, who will learn to look more closely, observe the elements of art, and enjoy the possibilities of being one who walks in beauty. BH

JOYCE, WILLIAM *Santa Calls*; written and illus. by William Joyce. Geringer/HarperCollins, 1993 [40p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021134-2 \$17.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021133-4 \$18.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

When Art Aimesworth, his best friend Spaulding Littlefeets, and Art's little sister Esther receive a fancy pre-Christmas gift of a flying machine from Santa, they follow the enclosed directive to "Come NORTH," the boys taking Esther along only reluctantly. Joyce's vision of the North Pole and Toyland is a celebration of Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* and Victor Fleming's *Wizard of Oz*; you can almost hear the Munchkins sing as the children enter the "vast, glorious, and glittering city." But there's trouble in Toyland: "Seize them," screams the Dark Queen (à la Margaret Hamilton) who with her "dark horde" of greedy Elves is determined to capture Esther. Why? no one knows, just as Art can't figure out why Santa called for the children in the first place. It's a Christmas mystery, but maybe the solution can be found in the two letters pasted into the last pages of the book, which is as big and lavish as the story. While the colors are sometimes dim,



the drawing and the details are generous, and the '40s retro look gives the story a nostalgic Christmas flair. Less sentimental and more exciting than *The Polar Express*, the book is an extravagant homage to Hollywood as much as to the holidays. RS

KINDL, PATRICE *Owl in Love*. Houghton, 1993 [208p]

ISBN 0-395-66162-5 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R\* Gr. 7-12

See this month's Big Picture, p. 35.

KUKLIN, SUSAN *Speaking Out: Teenagers Take on Race, Sex, and Identity*; written and illus. with photographs by Susan Kuklin. Putnam, 1993 165p

Trade ed. ISBN 0-399-22343-6 \$15.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-399-22532-3 \$8.95

R\* Gr. 9-12

As Kuklin notes in her introduction, Bayard Rustin High School for the Humanities in New York is the perfect place to find kids to talk about the importance of race, class, gender and self-identity in their lives. The student body at Humanities is a fourth each white, Latino, African American and Asian American, and the school has a conscious commitment to help students bridge ethnic and other borders. Through a variety of first-person portraits and wide-shots of classes and clubs in action, Kuklin demonstrates the effects that the multiple "isms" have in kids' daily lives. "This has to be more than a conversation about sweet and sour pork," cautions one Chinese American student, and the issues debated here—having a boy/girl friend of a different race, confronting prejudice in friends and teachers, interracial violence, balancing immigrant family expectations with American customs—have real bite. As in her *Fighting Back* (BCCB 3/89) or *What Do I Do Now?* (11/91), Kuklin allows her subjects to speak for themselves, even when it's a white boy explaining why he joined The National Association for the Advancement of White People, or a gay kid saying that he wished he was a girl: "Girls get more attention. Girls can be sexy and flirty." Voices we don't think of as "minority"—a fat girl, a stutterer—also speak their pieces and will widen readers' understanding of what being "different" can mean. Black-and-white portraits of the interviewees have a candor and immediacy missing in yearbook pictures, and many teens will see themselves within these pages. RS

LASKY, KATHRYN *Searching for Laura Ingalls: A Reader's Journey*; written by Kathryn Lasky and Meribah Knight; illus. with photographs by Christopher G. Knight. Macmillan, 1993 48p

ISBN 0-02-751666-0 \$15.95

Ad Gr. 2-4

Lasky and Knight have collaborated to create a book about their daughter, Meribah, and her love for the "Little House" series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. The narration and photographs take the reader along on Meribah's journey to historic Ingalls sites in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and South Dakota. An unfortunate omission from the book is the lack of a map to show the family's travels; since not all the locations of the historic sites are fully described or mapped, any reader interested in making a similar trip will have to reproduce the research. Combining Lasky's narration and excerpts from Meribah's trip diary, the tone of the book is somewhat studied and self-conscious, with even the excellent photos of Meribah on the journey having a somber mood: Meribah takes Laura Ingalls Wilder very seriously, and her

face reflects her feelings. Or maybe it's just that the prairie was sometimes more hot and boring than Laura let on. KJ

LEMIEUX, A. C. *The TV Guidance Counselor*. Tambourine, 1993 [240p]  
ISBN 0-688-12402-X \$13.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 7-10

When the book opens, Michael, from the safety of a teen psychiatric hospital, is remembering his suicide attempt and the events beginning with his parents' divorce that led up to it. He and his mother and sister were forced to move to a tiny run-down house while his father, a nautical photographer, took off on yet another glamorous trip across the ocean with a yacht race. This is standard, even old-fashioned, problem-novel fare; what gives the book its distinction is the authenticity of Michael's pained narration of his emotional free-fall, where even moments of epiphany, such as his discovery of his own gift for photography, or his empathy for a sad mentally-ill woman (the TV guidance counselor of the title), can't forestall his despair. His is a fresh voice, but the other characters—thoughtless father, bitter mother, understanding girlfriend—seem two-dimensional in contrast. Some preaching is personified in Michael's girlfriend, his photography teacher, and his boss at the grocery store where Michael works; and the overlay of therapeutic interludes from the hospital exacerbates the sense that character and events are overwhelmed by theme. Still, the conversations are sharp, and when the author lets the characters loose from the messages, as in the funny but poignant depiction of Michael's best friend Ricky, there's some real spark. RS

LERNER, CAROL *Plants That Make You Sniffle and Sneeze*; written and illus. by Carol Lerner. Morrow, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11490-3 \$14.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11489-X \$15.00

R Gr. 4-7

Like all of Lerner's plant books (see *Cactus*, BCCB 10/92), this one is clean, clear, and well organized, with beautifully rendered full-color or black-and-white botanical drawings balancing a somewhat dry text. The integrating theme here will prove particularly important to students afflicted with or researching allergies, as Lerner explains the role of plant pollens in hay fever, shows the functions of pollens in plant reproduction, and describes pollen sources—including various trees, bushes, grasses, and weeds—and the conditions that trigger pollen release. Some tips on avoiding hay fever pollen, annotations for two books on hay fever plants, and an index conclude the book, which will prove to be first-class preparation for field trips and science projects. BH

LEVERT, SUZANNE *Teens Face to Face with Chronic Illness*. Messner, 1993 129p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-671-74540-9 \$13.98

Paper ed. ISBN 0-671-74541-7 \$7.95

R Gr. 7-12

Based on extensive interviews with kids who face longterm physical problems, this book is divided into four sections: Understanding Chronic Illness, which describes the medical aspects of maladies such as AIDS, arthritis, epilepsy, diabetes, and cancer; Living Day by Day, which addresses the effects that such illnesses, with their physical and emotional cost, can have on everyday activities such as school and play; Relating to Others, which explores support from and problems with family members and friends platonic and romantic; and Looking at the World,

which discusses self-image and worldview. The voices of the teens are strong, honest, and smoothly integrated into the well-organized text. Sad truths—distant or destructive parents, rejecting friends, hospital buddies who didn't make it—appear, but the emphasis is on the positive, with most of the subjects adjusted to their state and its implications and sometimes demonstrating a useful sense of humor: Carl, whose joints are misshapen from arthritis, puts sharp-tongued strangers in their place by responding "Oh, sure, pick on the crippled kid." This is an absorbing and meaningful book likely to assist kids, most of whom know someone who faces the obstacle of illness, in understanding their peers and themselves; the organization by topic rather than by interviewee makes it a useful and more pointed companion to Krementz' *How It Feels to Live with a Physical Disability*. A glossary, index, and list of resources (medical associations, etc.) are included. DS

LITTLEFIELD, BILL *Champions*; illus. by Bernie Fuchs. Little, 1993 132p  
ISBN 0-316-52805-6 \$21.95 R Gr. 5-9

Ten famous sports champions (five men, five women) are the subjects of lively mini-biographies that, if always admiring, are never adulatory. Each of the subjects, whether jockey Julie Krone, soccer star Pelé, one-legged skier Diana Golden, or baseball legend Roberto Clemente, has achieved some kind of "first" or "best," and Littlefield, a sports commentator for National Public Radio, is at his best when recreating the record- or ground-breaking moments that will forever define each athlete. ("At my funeral, nobody's going to talk about me. They're all just going to stand up and tell each other where they were on the night I beat Bobby Riggs"—Billie Jean King.) The prose is fresh and colloquial without descending into the sports-page lingo that may be endearing to fans but is incomprehensible to the uninitiated. At times, though, it's not clear whether or not Littlefield has fictionalized conversations, as in a scene where Tiny Archibald receives a gruff pep talk from a high school basketball coach. Romantically light-dappled paintings, one or two per subject, add drama (Susan Butcher dogsledding the Iditarod) and inspiration (Joan Benoit's victory lap at the 1984 Olympics). A reading list and index are appended. RS

McPHAIL, DAVID *Santa's Book of Names*; written and illus. by David McPhail. Little, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-316-56335-8 \$14.95 R 4-6 yrs

On Christmas Eve, Edward helps out Santa when he gets in a tight spot, and we don't mean the chimney. Edward cannot yet read, but "he almost could. Almost . . . but not quite." Santa takes Edward along as his book-holding sinecure, and he triumphs when Santa loses his glasses and Edward has to sound out who-gets-what. The book's too gentle to be didactic, and yet it acknowledges the epiphany of reading, the moment when the symbols make sense. The paintings are gentle as well, realistic in their homely, comfy light of Edward's home and Christmassy in the blues and moonlight snow of Edward's pilgrimage to print. RS

MATHERS, PETRA *Victor and Christabel*; written and illus. by Petra Mathers. Knopf, 1993 32p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-679-93060-4 \$15.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-83060-X \$15.00 R 5-9 yrs

Christabel is a shy and retiring young reptile whose destiny is altered when her evil

cousin puts a spell on her that turns her into a painting. Victor, an attractive green 'gator, is an art museum guard who falls in love with the image of *Cousin Christabel on Her Sickbed*. Victor's devotion (and presumably his cup of tea, to go with Christabel's motto "A cup of tea will wake you up") rouses Christabel from her spell, and the two patient lovers are finally united. It's a charming and original story with traditional roots, and if the plot doesn't always move along as smoothly as it might it's still a cohesive yarn with some wryly humorous notes (Christabel "always did as she was told. Knowing this, she had long ago decided to live alone"). Mathers' art is terrific, with luminous but determined color bound firmly by crisp line, and it fills the pages with creatures of great character in interesting surroundings. Youngsters may never look at paintings in quite the same way, and they'll relish the unusual love story. DS

MAZER, ANNE *The Oxboy*. Knopf, 1993 109p  
ISBN 0-679-84191-1 \$13.00

Ad Gr. 4-7

The son of a woman once married to an ox narrates this fable, which is set in a time when the "blue hunters" (men with their faces painted blue) track down those who lack papers proving their ancestry, and children must learn in school to chant a sacred code: "We are human. We are nothing but human . . . Pure blood of the human race!" Betrayed by an informer, the narrator's father must flee from their isolated retreat, and Oxboy's mother marries again to protect her son. Since the boy looks entirely human and his stepfather is rigidly doctrinaire, Oxboy must struggle to conceal his animal characteristics of loving the woods and fields, but he cannot resist befriending a mixed-blood otter with human intelligence. Eventually they are caught, the otter is killed, and Oxboy is imprisoned for a year's term, after which he goes home and finds the tracks of his father, come to rescue him for a life as refugees searching through the forest "for the lost animals." Both the plot and writing style are allegorically stark, with the suspense of what will happen to the narrator played off against a tone of inevitable disaster. The moral, which is the story's *raison d'être*, does get fuzzy here and there; while the hero throws back any fish he finds with human characteristics, for instance, he has no compunction about killing and gutting "pure" fish, which seems to contradict the point of respecting differences. In another instance, a merciless mixed-blood eagle that has diverted a stream in order to destroy the otter's family and has just tried to kill both the otter and Oxboy ("Die!" . . . "Human waste!"), is itself shot by humans, whereupon the otter turns to Oxboy with the charge, "Yours is not a kind race." Despite some occasional confusion, however, the parallels with Nazi theories of pure Aryan ancestry, with police states that perpetrate "ethnic cleansing," and with society's more subtle forms of discrimination are clear—insistently clear, and students will find this a challenging book for discussion of prejudice in general. BH

MILLER, MARGARET *Can You Guess?*; written and illus. with photographs by Margaret Miller. Greenwillow, 1993 [40p]  
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11181-5 \$13.93  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11180-7 \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 2-4 yrs

"What do you comb in the morning? A blouse? Your face? Your leg? A bar of soap?" No, silly—"Your hair!" Miller's latest concept book is styled similarly to her exuberant *Where Does It Go?* (BCCB 10/92), although the subject is not as

firmly focused. Each question ("What do you pack in a suitcase," "What do you put on your head?") is faced by four incongruous possibilities, made all the funnier by Miller's sobersided photographs, such as a picture of a pizza floating in suds as a response to "What do you wash in the sink?" The correct answer ("Dishes!") appears on the next-page-turn, and a facing photo shows a child busily and triumphantly right. Just like the rest of us, kids love to be right, and they'll also love feeling one-up on the book all the way through while at the same time giggling at the book's "mistakes." RS

MILLER, MARY JANE *Fast Forward*. Viking, 1993 [144p]  
ISBN 0-670-84339-3 \$13.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-6

Kayla and her best friend Margy have eagerly anticipated their entry into sixth-grade, junior high for them, but both are dismayed to learn that Margy will be moving away to a nearby city. Kayla feels abandoned by Margy, who seems to have moved even farther emotionally than physically—she acquires a new friend with whom she shares special secrets and tries new things. Kayla's jealousy and loneliness make school even harder for her than usual, leading her to copy one of Margy's old papers for science class, but eventually things, including the possibility of a first boyfriend, are worked out amiably. The girl-pink cover of the book tells you what to expect: this is a well-done, heavy-duty if not deep, pre-teen girl book with heartaches, soap operas onscreen and off, makeovers, and *The Nutcracker*. Miller captures the milieu and fears well, and even though the plot wraps up a little too neatly, Kayla's narration is convincing and credible. DS

MONROE, LUCY *Creepy Cuisine: Revolting Recipes That Look Disgusting but Taste Divine*; illus. by Dianne O'Quinn Burke. Random House, 1993 80p Paper ed. ISBN 0-679-844002-3 \$4.99

R Gr. 4-7

"Whether you're preparing Chuckie's Upchuck for a potluck supper," the introduction begins, "Phlegm Brûlée for a festive party, or Pus Pockets as a quick after-school snack, the recipes in *Creepy Cuisine* are designed to unleash the grisly gourmet buried in everyone." And this happily revolting guide to gross goodies will either—or perhaps simultaneously—charm or repel its reader, even as its sound culinary advice gets them interested in the kitchen. After notes on safety, cooking terms, measurements, and cleanup, the book is divided into sections: "Horror D'Oeuvres," "Slimy Soups and Scary Salads," "Main Corpses," "Putrid Potions," "Dead-zerts and Sickening Snacks." There are quite a few monstrous and disgusting recipe ideas; some examples are "Bloody Eyeballs on the Rocks," "Ear Wax Wieners on Cotton Swabs," and "Poached Skull and Crossbones." Each recipe contains a list of ingredients and equipment (all pretty straightforward, if heavily dependent on olives) and simple clear instructions, plus information as to how many the dish serves (Phlegm Brûlée, for instance, serves "4 mucus maniacs"), plus a serving suggestion (for Bleeding Gums Gumbo, "chew a plaque-disclosing tablet before serving soup!"). The accompanying black-and-white illustrations have flair but are simple enough to serve as diagrams for the recipes. The dishes are not only relatively simple and reasonably appalling, they also keep to enough basic rules of cuisine to be completely edible. With its upbeat and slightly conspiratorial tone, the book is entertaining enough simply to read, but kids who wish to go beyond that may actually find themselves learning to cook. As Halloween approaches, this freaky Fannie Farmer deserves a prominent place. DS

MYERS, WALTER DEAN *Brown Angels: An Album of Pictures and Verse*. HarperCollins, 1993 40p illus. with photographs  
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022918-7 \$15.89  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022917-9 \$16.00 Ad 4-6 yrs

Old photographs of African-American children illustrate a collection of sweet, often naive verse by YA novelist Myers. The poetry is bland, conveying a generalized vision of childhood innocence through rhymes often forced in meter or sense: "Birds peeping/ Old men sleeping/ Lazy days, daisies lay/ Beaming and dreaming. . . ." The photographs, many from the author's collection, are much better—mostly formal, sepia-toned portraits of children in their Sunday best that will give gazers a view of times gone by. The book is elegantly, if sentimentally, designed, and while it has an adult-appealing gift-book look, children might enjoy the cozy lap-sitting reminiscences it seems to encourage. RS

PECK, RICHARD *Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats*. Delacorte, 1993 [192p]  
ISBN 0-385-30823-X \$14.95  
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 6-9

After the bankruptcy of the family horror-film business, Buffie Babcock, her older sister Bambi, and her little brother Brick are horrified to be transplanted to Dad's tiny hometown of Hickory Forks. As if transplantation from Bel-Air weren't enough, the siblings run smack into trouble at school: Dad's wholesome birthplace has turned into a teen-gang-dominated hellhole, with highschoolers keeping the adults too frightened to fight back even as the havoc wrecks the local mall, the town's only hope for economic survival. Bambi organizes a comeuppance, complete with use of the family's professional horror-show past, which turns the tables on the bad guys, restores order to Hickory Forks, and sells as a screenplay, thus enabling the family to return to Bel-Air. It's hard to know how to take much of this: Peck satirizes the Babcocks ("We're from *Bel-Air*. We don't have gangs. We have fund-raisers") and the Hickory Fork hicks (the opposing schools for the football season are "Toad Suck, Oil Trough, Possum Trot, Natural Steps, Viny Grove, and Booger Holler") with equal subtlety and lack of affection, leaving a reader with no characters to root for. The table-turning trick (a staged haunting) is pretty feeble, and Buffie's supposedly sixth-grade narration unconvincing. The whole has a slick made-for-TV air, however, that, coupled with the comedic teen-run campaign for law 'n' order, may make this book appeal to those readers who don't think they're in it. DS

PILKEY, DAV *Dragon's Halloween: Dragon's Fifth Tale*; written and illus. by Dav Pilkey. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 48p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08590-2 \$12.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05990-1 \$12.95 R Gr. K-2

Few easy-reader heroes are as endearingly hapless as Pilkey's big blue Dragon, who here finds out that six small jack-o'-lanterns can be even scarier than the one big one he really wanted. That's the first of three Halloween adventures; the others feature Dragon's attempt at a costume (he goes to a party as a witch, vampire, and mummy) and his scary walk home through the woods. The eccentrically colored pencil-and-watercolor paintings provide some zippy punchlines and a spooky/silly evocation of the Halloween mood, as in a picture of the blue beast yelping for help under a huge lemon-lime moon. RS



PINKNEY, ANDREA DAVIS *Seven Candles for Kwanzaa*; illus. by Brian Pinkney. Dial, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1293-6 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1292-8 \$14.99

R 5-9 yrs

Books about the African-American holiday Kwanzaa are many in this era of "multicultural" publishing; like A. P. Porter's *Kwanzaa* (BCCB 12/91), the Pinkneys' is a simple introduction to the rituals, objects, and meanings of this "first fruits" festival that runs from December 26 through New Year's Day. The book explains the seven principles (including their Swahili names and pronunciation) of Kwanzaa, the menorah-like kinara with its black, red, and green candles, and other ceremonial objects and greetings. Spaciously laid out and illustrated with Pinkney's familiar scratchboard and oil pastel art, the text is easier and clearer than Porter's, and the glosses on the Kwanzaa principles speak to a child's experience: "Sculpting mounds of clay or reciting a favorite rhyme are also ways to express kuumba [creativity]. So is planting seedlings on the windowsill and nurturing them to sprout." A friendly introduction to what may still be a "new" holiday to both children and adults. RS

POMERANTZ, CHARLOTTE *The Outside Dog*; illus. by Jennifer Plecas. HarperCollins, 1993 64p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024783-5 \$13.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024782-7 \$14.00

R\* Gr. 1-3

The four chapters in this beginning-to-read book give away the plot: Marisol Wants a Dog; A Collar for Pancho; The Search; and Pancho Saves the Day. But what makes the story work are the convincing bits of dialogue and the details with which Pomerantz develops a Puerto Rican setting and cast of characters, all with minimal use of vocabulary. "I don't know why I love such a foolish little girl," says Grandfather. "I don't know why I love such a foolish old grandpa," says Marisol. But love there plainly is, enough even to encompass the mutt Grandfather so ineffectively resists. The scratchy pen-and-wash cartoons are as plain and down-to-earth friendly as the text. A list of nine Spanish words follows the list of contents, which will be fun for kids who don't know the language and reinforcing for kids who do—be prepared for *Vete* (Scram) to become a byword among young readers. BH

PORTER, CONNIE *Meet Addy: An American Girl*; illus. by Melodye Rosales. Pleasant Company, 1993 [69p] (American Girls)

Trade ed. ISBN 1-56247-076-0 \$12.95

Paper ed. ISBN 1-56247-075-2 \$5.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-5

Addy, the latest heroine in the American Girls Collection (see review of Valerie Tripp's *Meet Felicity*, BCCB 10/91), is an African-American slave who, in this first installment in the series, escapes to freedom with her mother. While Addy possesses few character traits beyond being brave and good, the picture of slavery is honest, as in a scene where Addy is forced to eat the worms she was supposed to have picked from the tobacco plants: "Addy gagged as the worms' juicy bodies burst in her mouth." Otherwise, the writing is competent but bland, although the escape by moonlight is inherently exciting, especially when Addy, disguised as a boy, accidentally stumbles into a camp of Confederate soldiers. While the book

necessarily lacks the cozy comfort of most of the American Girls titles, series fans may be lured by the attractive format and easy reading into a sobering consideration of some of the less picturesque aspects of American history. Full-color paintings add drama; an afterword gives some historical context to the story. RS

RATTIGAN, JAMA KIM *Dumpling Soup*; illus. by Lillian Hsu-Flanders. Little, 1993 32p

ISBN 0-316-73445-4 \$15.95

R\* 5-8 yrs

Two classic components, food and love, form the basis of this story of a joyous family celebration. Marisa is seven, and she's finally old enough to help make dumplings for the family gathering at Grandma's, where the family members ("Most of them are Korean, but some are Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, or haole. . . . Grandma calls our family 'chop suey,' which means 'all mixed up' in pidgin") meet to cook and convivate. The subject here is really the pleasure of togetherness, with Marisa's dumpling trouble—hers look terrible but eventually prove quite tasty—serving as a flavorful seasoning instead of an entree. Rattigan has a gift for the kind of specifics that make a book come alive: the warm kitchen filled with female relatives cooking up a storm and the front step covered with people's slippers and shoes will appeal to a range of kids more than your basic Anytown USA setting and cast. The illustrations, light-hearted pencil and watercolor, are reminiscent of Catherine Stock's, with a nice homely graininess and tell-tale detail (the watermelon-slice-pattern playsuit is a particular winner) all their own. This luscious refutation of the melting-pot metaphor begs for gustatory aids. DS

REISER, LYNN *Margaret and Margarita*/Margarita y Margaret; written and illus. by Lynn Reiser. Greenwillow, 1993 [32p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-12240-X \$13.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-12239-6 \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

R 4-7 yrs

Margaret does not want to go to the park . . . y *Margarita no quiere ir al parque*. Neither little girl, one English-speaking, one speaking Spanish, wants to go the park because there is nobody to play with. But then they meet, discover an affinity, have a party/*fiesta* with their stuffed animals and a nap/*siesta* with same, and resolve to meet again tomorrow/*mañana*. The English text is printed in pink and the Spanish in blue, and while the text is generally parallel, there is some variation, as when the two girls bless their napping toys: "Sweet Dreams/*Que Sueñen con los Angelitos*." Monolinguals, both kids and adults, should be able to figure out the other language via cues in the simple but lively line-and-watercolor pictures, and the words in both languages are easy enough that while phoneticization might have been nice, it may not be necessary. This is not an exceptionally eventful picture book, but the friendship is sweet and the bicultural/lingual message has a pleasant flavor as well. RS

SENDAK, MAURICE, ad. *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures*; ad. and illus. by Maurice Sendak. DiCapua/HarperCollins, 1993 56p

ISBN 0-06-205014-1 \$20.00

R 5-7 yrs

These lesser-known Mother Goose rhymes have as much resonance as any classic Opie find; the story, as played out in Sendak's artwork and dialogue, is somewhat

more complicated. Jack and Guy, two street urchins, witness the kidnapping of a child and some kittens by evil humanized rats; when the urchins lose to the rats in a card game, the "poor little kid" and the kittens are spirited away to St. Paul's Bakery and Orphanage, but the waxing moon transports Jack and Guy to the little kid and then routs the villainous rodents. Underlying the story is a struggle between the haves and the have nots, with the kid and kits taken from a Hooverville where the kittens are literally falling through the cracks and the rats dressed as cards—hearts and diamonds ("For diamonds are trumps," says the rhyme, and the illustrations make a specific reference to Trump Tower). Although fused into one story, the two rhymes get different stylistic treatments, which affects their impact. "We are all in the dumps" is visually and verbally overcrowded—perhaps intentionally, but still distractingly—as urban blight chokes the scene and yellow speech balloons display a dispensable, Sendak-authored rhyme commenting on the pictured plot (good luck to readers-aloud in figuring out which to read). The second rhyme, where Jack and Guy and the moon rescue the small child, quickens into a haunting evocation of human frailty and need. While the mix of politics and poetry compounds the disarray in the first half, the lunar majesty and restrained sadness of the second allows the story to embrace its social concerns rather than battle with them. Overall, it's an absorbing tale of danger and rescue, with the shantytown given a rough charm by the moonlit landscape, sprightly kittens, and towering skyscrapers, and the gloomy orphanage grounds simultaneously suggesting a vacant urban lot and a rye-filled world of old rhymes. Even at its most complicated, the book generates enough magic to be involving as one attempts to understand it—or asks a child to. DS

SEYMOUR, TRES *Hunting the White Cow*; illus. by Wendy Anderson Halperin. Jackson/Orchard, 1993 32p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08646-1 \$15.99  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-05496-9 \$15.95

R 4-7 yrs.

"Somewhere north of Priceville there's a white cow nobody can catch. She used to be ours, but she went wild." The narrator, depicted in meticulously drafted, clay-toned rural landscapes, watches as her farm family's menfolk cumulatively set out to catch the white cow, each with a refrain (punctuated by Mama's skeptical comments) that gains momentum for rhythmic reading aloud. Even Papaw's southern Kentucky cow call ("SOUK! SOUK! SOUK! SOUK-EF! WHEEEEEOO! SOUK!") fails, but after several months the narrator finds the white cow in the woods and falls asleep with her arm tied to the cow, which won't follow her and manages to wrap the rope around a tree and break it off before her father finds and wakes her up. Text and illustrations offer an especially integrated complement here, both understated but right on target tonally and both incorporated into a large, comfortably balanced page design. After a couple of worthwhile rereadings, young listeners will chant right along with the narrator, who ends the tale determined to learn cow-calling from her grandfather. "Watch out, white cow. Watch out." BH

SIMON, SEYMOUR *Weather*. Morrow, 1993 32p illus. with photographs  
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10547-5 \$14.93  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10546-7 \$15.00

Ad Gr. 4-6

Gorgeous full-page color photos, helped by a few cogent diagrams, illustrate Simon's outline of how weather works. He explains why the poles are colder than the

equator, why that temperature difference causes weather changes, and how clouds and precipitation form, ending with a warning about the dangers of smog and global warming. He does not go into exciting phenomena such as thunder, lightning and tornadoes; for that, readers should turn to the author's *Storms* (BCCB 3/89). The organization is clear and logical, and while the information is available in any number of other books and encyclopedias, the photos, such as a Skylab view of cloud formations, add a dramatic dimension. RS

SMITH, LANE *The Happy Hocky Family!*; written and illus. by Lane Smith. Viking, 1993 61p  
ISBN 0-670-85206-6 \$13.99 SpR Gr. 3-5

Pity the happy, hapless, Hocky family: Baby Hocky's balloon pops; Holly Hocky's boat won't float until, with a dose of Little Engine determination, it floats . . . away; Henry Hocky, tired after a day of tormenting Holly with a dead spider, can't get any quality nap time when Holly decides to serenade her also napping dolly with a tuba. Expectations dashed over and over, the Hocky family still often manages to regroup, as when Baby Hocky's balloon ("I have a balloon. Do you have a balloon?") bursts ("I have a string. Do you have a string?"). Deriding the social and linguistic banalities of old primers, the book as a whole depends upon an adult, camp sensibility for its effects, but older kids, especially those primed by Scieszka and Smith's *Sinky Cheese Man* or *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, may appreciate some of the takeoffs. They won't get the joke but they may get the jokes. The three-color, dumb-dumb dot, circle, and line illustrations, flash back to the '50s and will have a sardonic appeal for nostalgic grownups while the kids are engrossed in James Marshall's *Stupids* books, a series with a truly child's-eye view of family absurdities. RS

SNEVE, VIRGINIA DRIVING HAWK *The Navajos*; ISBN 0-8234-1039-0; *The Sioux*; ISBN 0-8234-1017-X. Each book: illus. by Ronald Himler. Holiday House, 1993 32p (First American Books) \$15.95 R Gr. 2-6

Each of these two volumes begins with a simplified retelling of the respective Native American group's creation myth and then goes on to a brief coverage of its history, traditions, social structure, and contemporary life. Although formatted as picture books, the pair's factual texts and naturalistic paintings broaden the audience to include independent readers as well as interested younger listeners. Sneve's tone is matter-of-fact, but she has punctuated her overview with poetic quotes. The very commitment of each book to a particular people will help dispel the amorphous lumping together of "Indians" that tends to dominate elementary-school units on U.S. history; reading the two books together makes tribal differences obvious despite common spiritual values such as reverence for the land. The books could have used a bibliography for students who wanted to read further, and the maps are too sketchy—one looks in vain for the locations of Fort Defiance and Fort Sumner, between which soldiers forced thousands of surrendering Navajos to march on the killing "Long Walk" in 1863-64. Reducing so much information for such selective presentation has inherent hazards, but it's an important process for subjects that have been far more oversimplified in the mass media than they are here. Himler's art work balances the aesthetic with the instructive, the past with the present, in compositions that are steeped in plains or desert hues and are vibrant with action. BH

SOTO, GARY *Too Many Tamales*; illus. by Ed Martinez. Putnam, 1993 32p  
ISBN 0-399-22146-8 \$14.95 R 4-7 yrs.

A Christmas story, Latino story, and child-appealing story all rolled into one starts with Maria and her mother preparing for a family gathering by making tamales together: "Maria happily kneaded the *masa*. She felt grown-up, wearing her mother's apron. Her mom had even let her wear lipstick and perfume. If only I could wear Mom's ring, she thought to herself." A classic setup! When Mom leaves the room, Maria tries the ring on, kneads the dough, forgets the ring, and remembers too late—after the tamales are cooked and the ring is missing from her finger. The only solution is to gather all the cousins and make them eat every tamale. What they get is not the ring, but stomachaches all around. When Maria confesses, she sees the ring gleaming securely on the hand of her mother, who had rescued it from the dough, and is gently teased out of her chagrin by Aunt Rosa, who starts another batch of tamales. This is a mini-drama rendered so acutely that everyone who has lost something precious will respond, from young viewers to erstwhile children now reading the story aloud to their own charges. The deeply colored paintings, though somewhat posed, intensify the emotional tenor with realistic portraits and thickly textured domestic interiors that serve as dark backdrop to the expressive central character. Soto inflects the narrative with details that incline unpretentiously toward the lyrical without interrupting or overextending the story (as Maria kneads the second batch of dough, "a leftover tear fell from her eyelashes into the bowl and for just a second rested on her finger, sparkling like a jewel"). Vividly traditional but more subtle than the overused piñata scenario, this Christmas crowd-pleaser will serve up a nice balance for Anglo holiday lore. BH

STOCK, CATHERINE *Where Are You Going, Manyoni?*; written and illus. by Catherine Stock. Morrow, 1993 40p  
Library ed. ISBN 0-688-10353-7 \$14.93  
Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-10352-9 \$15.00 R 4-6 yrs

Manyoni is a little girl who lives near the Limpopo River in Zimbabwe, and on this fine morning she's off to . . . where? That's the closest thing to a story offered here, as we watch Manyoni cross the ridge above the dry river bed, wander by the wild fig trees and malala palms, and otherwise serve as our guide to her part of the world. As was true of Rachel Isadora's *Over the Green Hills* (BCCB 7/92), Stock's story is mainly a frame to introduce the landscape and its flora and fauna, with the real focus of the book being Stock's double-spread watercolor paintings. However, both story and pictures are more specific than Isadora's expressionistic landscapes, and there's some suspense as Manyoni gets ever closer to her destination: school. The pictures employ a spectrum of greens and dusty brown, with each one presenting a scene filled with life and possibilities for you-are-there imagining. Kids will enjoy finding Manyoni—sometimes foregrounded, sometimes a tiny figure in the background—in each picture, and there's plenty of wildlife to be counted and named. A picture glossary of the animals is included, as well as a glossary and pronunciation guide to foreign words. RS

TOLAN, STEPHANIE S. *Save Halloween!* Morrow, 1993 [176p]  
ISBN 0-688-12168-3 \$14.00  
Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

While her family's strict fundamentalist faith forbids it, sixth-grader Johanna has

always (surreptitiously) participated in her school's Halloween activities, and she doesn't want this year to be any exception. This year, she's been put in charge of writing the script for the Halloween pageant; unfortunately, this is also the year her charismatic preacher uncle has come to visit and is embarking on an anti-Halloween crusade. It's a hot-button topic, and Tolan easily manages to surround the issue with some real drama. While characterization is somewhat rudimentary, it isn't stereotyped. Johanna's father is also a minister, but one who lacks the fiery oratorical—and fund-raising—skills of his brother; Uncle T. T. has his slick side, but he also has a sense of humor and comes to respect Johanna's decision to stick up for herself when peer and family values conflict. The portrait of fundamentalism is fair and unsensationalized, and Johanna's contemplations on the mysteries of prayer, faith, and death should evoke a sympathetic chord in readers of varying religious backgrounds. RS

TRYON, LESLIE *Albert's Field Trip*; written and illus. by Leslie Tryon. Atheneum, 1993 32p

ISBN 0-689-31821-9 \$14.95

Ad 4-6 yrs

In the third of a series of stories about Albert, the duck teacher, and his young class (see *Albert's Play*, BCCB 3/92), the group visits "George and Gracie's Apple Farm." Resourceful Albert drives the school bus full of his animal students and a few adult chaperones (a kangaroo and pig). The first-person narration will sometimes puzzle the listener because it is not clear who the narrator is, but the full-color scenes of androgynous animals at an orchard have a cuteness that preschoolers will enjoy. The unknown narrator, who could be the skunk assigned to write a story of their trip, finishes each description of what they did at the orchard with "but that wasn't the best part. . . ." The "best part" that concludes the story will probably appeal more to adults reading aloud than to their audience—the best part is getting tucked in bed by their parents after they get home. This is a sweet, mild book that can be used with very young children before either a field trip or bedtime. KJ

TUNNELL, MICHAEL O. *The Joke's on George*; illus. by Kathy Osborn. Tambourine, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-11759-7 \$13.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-11758-9 \$14.00

R 5-8 yrs

The George of the title is George Washington, and the joke in question was played by early American collector and painter Charles Willson Peale. Peale's son Rembrandt narrates the story, setting the scene by describing his father's eccentric individualism and George Washington's legendary courtesy to all, then telling how the first president was fooled by a trompe-l'oeil painting of two Peale children on a stairway, to which he bowed politely. It's a slender plot, more of an anecdote, but it's still an entertaining tale that shows Washington in a different light. It could also prompt some interesting artistic discussions—trompe-l'oeil is a highly kid-appealing kind of art, and there are enticing examples around, making it easy to move beyond this book. The illustrations are highly and entertainingly stylized: they're flat, with little perspective, and there's a carved look to the figures that makes George look more wooden than his teeth; but the pictures are livened up with interesting detail and planes of bright color that help make this a cheery interlude for an art or history unit. DS



UPDIKE, DAVID *The Sounds of Summer*; illus. by Robert Andrew Parker. Pippin, 1993 40p  
ISBN 0-945912-20-X \$14.95 R 5-8 yrs

Like *A Spring Story* (BCCB 3/90) and the other two seasonal tales in this series, the last involves a boy named Homer and a dog named Sophocles, but this time they have come to a parting of ways. Homer worries about how much Soph is slowing down with age, and sure enough, the dog can't keep up with him and his friend Henry as they run home through a storm following a boat trip with old Mr. Birch. When they look for him, he's gone, but Homer pursues the search all through the night, finally finding Sophocles lying ill in the marsh. The next several pages are a painful goodbye that will leave no eyes dry, so although this text was born to be read aloud, be forewarned that you may not be able to finish it without choking up. Kids will love it, identify with it, and grieve with Homer as he listens to the approaching sounds of fall, "the first time in his life he had spent it without Sophocles." The text is long for a picture book format, but beautifully written except for occasional grammatical glitches ("Henry wrapped Sophocles back in the blanket and lay him down in the boat"). Updike has shown wisdom in revealing adults as being sometimes falsely reassuring and in showing a child's first mourning as painfully inevitable. Parker's full-page pen-and-watercolor illustrations, which are sophisticated in a loose, unstudied style devoid of self-consciousness, will take the book well into an age group that can read it independently and appreciate it all the more in private. BH

USPENSKY, EDUARD *Uncle Fedya, His Dog, and His Cat*; tr. from the Russian by Michael Henry Heim; illus. by Vladimir Shpitalnik. Knopf, 1993 136p  
ISBN 0-679-82064-7 \$14.00 R Gr. 3-5

This translation of a Russian children's fantasy is the tale of a little boy named Fedya who is so serious that his parents have nicknamed him "Uncle." His mother won't let him keep any pets, even after he finds a talking cat. In order to stay with his cat, Uncle Fedya runs away to the country. There, he and his cat find an empty house and a talking dog (who learned to speak from the same professor who taught the cat). This cousin to Pippi Longstocking has the same foreign flavor and fantasy of independence—Uncle Fedya's house is nice and cozy, and when he needs money, he easily finds a buried treasure. While his parents search for their lost boy, Uncle Fedya's household grows to include a happy-go-lucky tractor, a mean-tempered cow, and a thieving jackdaw named Jack Grabbit. The comical character of Pechkin the Postmaster, who is always being outsmarted by the animals, is the one who finally locates Uncle Fedya for his parents. Folksy black-and-white illustrations add to the humor of the story. The translation is in short, simple sentences that are often funny—near the book's end, the cow says her first word, "Disgraceful!" The cat asks "Why haven't you talked until now?" She responds "To you? What for?" KJ

WESLEY, MARY *Haphazard House*. Overlook, 1993 144p  
ISBN 0-87951-470-1 R Gr. 7-10

"Haphazard" is the house in the countryside that painter Andrew Fuller buys with his Derby winnings; he, his wife, their daughter Lisa (the narrator) and son Josh are thrilled to get out of London, especially when the realtor threatens—or prom-

ises—that Haphazard House is haunted. Taking with them Grandpa, a few young people from the city, a couple of pets, and what seems to be a magic Panama hat, the family settles happily into Haphazard, where the house readies itself for them, an invisible gardener brings in vegetables, people seem to grow younger, and a ghostly figure—wearing the Panama hat—waves at them from a window. Unlike most ghost stories, which are about getting “them” to rest and ending the phenomena, this one is about “us” becoming “them” and the dislocation going on forever as the Fullers realize that their lives and destiny are intertwined with that of the ghosts/former residents and that “time is askew,” so the past and future pop up randomly and simultaneously. Wesley creates a terrific sense of atmosphere all through the book, ranging from the cheerfully eccentric family that takes along a toad-loving traffic warden to their new home, to the alluring creepiness of Haphazard’s mysteries and its village stuck in—or outside of—time. Some plot points remain a little murky—it’s not clear what exactly the timeslip is, or why the village couple is so opposed to the climactic installation of a glass stairway in the house—but the ambiguities are part of the misty tone. Reminiscent of *Playing Beatie Bow* (although *Haphazard House* has a more unusual ending), this will appeal to Anglophiles and spooky-story aficionados. DS

WILLIAMS, DAVID *Grandma Essie’s Covered Wagon*; illus. by Wiktor Sadowski. Knopf, 1993 41p

Library ed. ISBN 0-679-90253-8 \$16.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-80253-3 \$16.00

R 5-8 yrs.

Following a note on the author’s source is a first-person narrative describing Grandma Essie’s birth in a Missouri log cabin “almost ninety years ago” and her family’s travels, first in a covered wagon to western Kansas, then driven south by drought to Oklahoma, and finally back to a farm in Missouri. From a historical point of view, this is rich in the very commonness of the experience, allowing kids a glimpse into the past of those who suffered more than they succeeded in their dreams of westward expansion. As a picture-book story, it meanders descriptively rather than delivering a story with beginning, middle, and end. The art itself has a still quality of scenes frozen in time, due partly to the thick textures of the painting and partly to figures that seem formally posed in each monochromatic composition. Though this may not play successfully as preschool entertainment, it will provide solid support for primary-grades exploration of U.S. history and family roots. BH

WILLIAMS, VERA B. *Scooter*; written and illus. by Vera B. Williams. Greenwillow, 1993 150p

Library ed. ISBN 0-688-09377-9 \$14.93

Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-09376-0 \$15.00

R\* Gr. 3-5

Elana Rose Rosen loves her scooter, even when she falls over the handlebars while riding it in front of her new apartment in the Melon Hill Houses, a housing project that, as the summer spins on, reveals itself as a good place for great times. Elana misses her cousin and best friend Nanette, but she soon makes friends in her new home, particularly attracting a little boy named Petey, whom everyone is convinced can’t talk. Elana learns differently, though, and it’s just one terrific discovery in a summer filled with them. She’s an impulsive, eager-beaver narrator, and the small and large dramas of the Melon Hill families find their way unselfconsciously into her story. The voice is totally authentic, and Williams pep-

pers the pages with ink drawings that have an equally authentic childlike zest, nowhere better expressed than in the acrostics Elana likes to compose and illustrate: "Everyday she rides her scooter. Loves to dance and loves music. Admits she acts stupid and stuck up sometimes. Now she has friends at Melon Hill Houses. And Nanette is coming." The book is vigorous, innocent (not a television in sight) but not naive, and immensely refreshing in its low-tech style and attention to things kids find important. RS

WITTLINGER, ELLEN *Lombardo's Law*. Houghton, 1993 [192p]

ISBN 0-395-65969-8 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 7-9

Fifteen-year-old Justine Trainor and her parents are still newcomers to their Boston suburb when the Lombardo family moves in next door. Because Justine is a loner, her mother hopes she will make friends with Heather Lombardo. Not a chance. Heather is gorgeous and superficial, and she soon fits into sophomore high-society, leaving a grateful Justine alone. Justine is surprised to learn that she shares a love of movies with Heather's eighth-grade brother, Mike. They become friends and combine their interests to write, produce, and star in a take-off of *2001*. Their friendship gets more complex when Justine starts dating a boy in her grade, Mike finds a girlfriend, and they both try to hide their jealousy even as Justine struggles with her attraction to Mike: "It wasn't fair. I wanted to be crazy about someone who'd get a driver's license before I did." This first young adult novel by Wittlinger not only strikes at a real dating issue for teenagers, but also has a plot that is satisfying and not too crowded. The movie project is interesting; the romance is innocent and lightly suspenseful. KJ

YEP, LAURENCE, ad. *The Shell Woman & the King: A Chinese Folktale*; illus. by Yang Ming-Yi. Dial, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1395-9 \$13.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1394-0 \$13.99

R 5-8 yrs.

When likable Uncle Wu marries a magical woman from the sea, he's proud enough to boast of her accomplishments, which quickly reach the ears of a greedy king. Shell must then fulfill three seemingly impossible requests or lose her beloved Wu and become the king's wife: first, she must provide the hair of a toad; second, the arm of a ghost; and third, a bushel of luck. Each of these Shell accomplishes, but the king has not stipulated what kind of luck she must provide. Needless to say, what he gets is not what he wanted. With the practiced confidence that made *The Rainbow People* (BCCB 4/89) such a successful collection, Yep narrates this eighteenth-century tale without diluting its life-and-death elements or intruding on its inherently strong form. Yang Ming-Yi's illustrations move gracefully from a shell-pink motif to a fiery red that finally consumes the villain; similarly, his compositions include both serene seascapes and the amputation of a clawed arm. It's a mark of respect for folklore when re-creators encompass both its beauty and its terror, something this author-artist team has accomplished with finesse. BH



## PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS: WHERE DOES THE LIBRARIAN FIT IN THE "WHOLE" PICTURE?

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"Whole language," "literature-based curriculum," "resource-based teaching," "integrated language arts instruction"—what do they mean to you? Sampling various educators' definitions and opinions of these terms reveals numerous—often conflicting—theories, but there's a common focus on connections: connections to literature, connections to and among students, connections between teachers and librarians, connections across disciplines.

The tenets most widely accepted as part of the whole language philosophy include: child-centered focus in instruction/interaction; individualized instruction; integrated instruction across disciplines; student self-selection of literature to read; and journal writing. While the first two components are certainly of concern and interest to the librarian, the latter three are directly related to books and libraries. Integrated or thematic instruction is fertile ground for collaboration between teachers and librarians. Working together to develop an integrated unit provides both with the opportunity to articulate clearly the central ideas, content/skill goals and outcomes, and instructional and informational roles each person will take in the implementation of the unit. While librarians typically gather materials and develop bibliographies for such units, cooperative planning can further enhance what the librarian and teacher do as instructional partners.

Librarians continually assess the curriculum and the collection; making available a wide range of literature, factual and fictional, is essential to support resource-based teaching. The more recent challenge, as schools move toward a whole language philosophy, is to work with teachers in assisting them to select a range of appropriate materials for their classroom collections. The need for in-service training in this area is growing as teachers seek to become more knowledgeable of the criteria for selecting good books, as well as keeping current in the field of children's literature. Librarians are uniquely qualified to provide this staff development in workshops and to individuals on a day-to-day basis.

Writing, particularly response journal writing, is dependent upon experience with and exposure to a wide range of literature. Students' appreciation of the writing of others increases as they listen to fine stories and read widely themselves. Teachers and librarians can assist students in understanding the structure of literature, insuring that such understanding does not interfere with enjoying a story for its own merit. Librarians working in collaboration with teachers can take an active part in providing students with a framework for responding to literature through helping them become aware of genres, literary elements, literary devices, and visual literacy. Sharing these concepts gives children more insight into the reading and writing process. Collaboration may take the form of directly working with students to develop literary awareness or working with the teacher to assist him/her in enriching reading and writing instruction.

A fifth-grade teacher at Leal School integrated new components into her reading/writing workshops this year using clear, simple picture book stories as examples of the use of literary elements and devices. She found that students developed an increased awareness of genres and techniques in their reading as well as incorporating them into their response journal writing and their own creative writing. Experience with literary elements in picture books helped the students to recognize them in more complex books as well as to articulate in class discussions how authors used them in their writing. All this was accomplished without violat-

ing the precept that "knowledge about literature should be secondary to children's wide experiencing of literature" (Huck, p. 709).

Librarians can and should be part of the "whole" picture. Professional journals and books can serve as springboards to and resources for enriching the language experiences of teachers and students. The possibilities for new connections and partnerships are limited only by our creativity and imagination.

Canavan, Diane D. & Sanborn, LaVonne H. *Using Children's Books in Reading/Language Arts Programs*. (Neal-Schuman, 1992. 206p.; ISBN 1-55570-101-9, paper \$29.95). This "how-to-do-it" manual for school and public librarians is designed to serve as an aid to locating children's books that illustrate reading, language, and literary instructional concepts in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Carletti, Silvana, Girard, Suzanne & Willing, Kathlene. *The Library/Classroom Connection*. (Heineman, 1991. 128p.; ISBN 0-435-08711-8, paper \$13.50). Carletti, Girard, and Willing present a Canadian perspective on collaborative strategies which connect libraries, teachers, and librarians.

Hall, Susan. *Using Picture Storybooks to Teach Literary Devices: Recommended Books for Children and Young Adults*. (Oryx, 1990. 176p., ISBN 0-89774-582-5, paper \$29.95). Hall discusses how picture storybooks can be used to teach literary devices and provides an extensive source list categorized by device.

Huck, Charlotte, Hepler, Susan & Hickman, Janet. *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. (Harcourt, Fifth Edition, 1993. 775 p.; ISBN 0-03-047528-7, \$46.00). Huck draws on her extensive knowledge and experience in children's literature to provide a rationale and suggestions to teachers for planning and evaluating a literature-based curriculum.

Lamme, Linda Leonard & Ledbetter, Linda. (1990) "Libraries: The Heart of Whole Language," *Language Arts* 67 (7), 735-741. Lamme and Ledbetter provide examples from Florida schools to show what happens when librarians and teachers collaborate in language arts curriculum and instruction.

Lukens, Rebecca. *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*. (Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, Fourth Edition, 1990. 309 p.; ISBN 0-673-38773-9, paper \$20.50). This handbook provides a framework for examining children's books in terms of criteria, genres, and literary elements.

Marantz, Sylvia S. *Picture Books for Looking and Learning: Awakening Visual Perceptions Through the Art of Children's Books*. (Oryx, 1992. 208 p.; ISBN 0-89774-716-X, paper \$24.50). Marantz helps teachers and librarians gain some of the information and confidence needed to share visual experiences with their students through the use of picture books.

Routman, Regie. *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. (Heineman, 1991. 672 p.; ISBN 0-435-08593-X, \$37.50, ISBN 0-435-08578-6, paper \$25.00). Routman offers specific strategies for putting whole language theory into practice.

Sutherland, Zena & Arbuthnot, May Hill. *Children and Books*. (HarperCollins, Eighth Edition, 1991. 768 p.; ISBN 0-673-46357-5, \$45.00). This text is designed for classes in children's literature with emphases on children and their needs, on criteria and types of literature, and on artists and authors.

Van Vliet, Lucille W. *Approaches to Literature Through Genre*. (Oryx, 1992. 288 p.; ISBN 0-89774-773-9, paper \$29.95). Van Vliet emphasizes grouping literature by genre to focus on the pattern or structure of fiction. Literary elements and critical thinking skills are explored within the genre framework

*Janie Schomberg, Leal Elementary School, Urbana, IL.*

## SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

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Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this new index, which will appear in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In no way meant to be a cataloging aid, this rather idiosyncratic index is instead intended to lead readers to those books that could fill a particular gap in a collection, to help teachers and librarians find books that might be useful in various school or recreational settings, and to help in those requests for a "love story" or a "scary story." In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

African Americans—fiction: Porter  
 African Americans—poetry: Myers  
**Art history:** Isaacson; Tunnell  
 Asian Americans—stories: Rattigan  
 Aunts—stories: Honeycutt  
 Babies—stories: Cutler  
 Ballet: Anderson  
**BEDTIME STORIES:** Emberley;  
     Fox; Honeycutt; Tryon  
**BIOGRAPHIES:** Carrick; Freed-  
     man  
 Birds—fiction: Evans; Kindl  
 Birthdays—stories: Hest  
 Blankets—stories: Henkes  
 Books and reading—stories: McPhail  
 Brothers and sisters—fiction: Blume;  
     Ephron  
 Brothers and sisters—stories: Joyce  
 Bullies—fiction: Duffey  
 Chess—fiction: Sutcliffe  
 China—stories: Yep  
 Christmas—stories: Brett; Joyce;  
     McPhail; Soto  
 City life—fiction: Williams, V.  
**CONCEPT BOOKS:** Miller, Mar-  
     garet  
**COOKBOOKS:** Monroe  
 Cows—stories: Seymour  
 Dance and dancers: Anderson  
 Death—fiction: Byars; Greene  
 Death—stories: Bruchac; Updike  
 Disabilities: LeVert  
 Disabilities—fiction: Butler

Divorce—fiction: LeMieux  
 Dogs—fiction: Pomerantz  
 Dogs—stories: Updike  
**Ethics and values:** Mazer; Sendak;  
     Tolan  
**FABLES:** Banks  
 Family life—fiction: Blume  
**FANTASY:** Avi; Byars; Kindl; Ma-  
     zer; Sutcliffe; Uspensky  
**Farm life:** Williams, D.  
**FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES:**  
     Bernhard; Hodges; Yep  
 Food and eating—stories: Rattigan;  
     Soto  
 Friends—fiction: Miller, M. J.  
 Gangs—fiction: Peck  
**GHOST STORIES:** Gordon, J.;  
     Wesley  
 Grandfathers—fiction: Pomerantz  
 Grandmothers—stories: Bruchac;  
     Cutler; Hest  
**Guidance:** Kuklin; LeVert  
 Halloween—fiction: Tolan  
 Halloween—stories: Pilkey  
**Health:** Lerner; LeVert  
**HISTORICAL FICTION:** Hill;  
     Porter  
**History, U.S.:** Antle; Bial; Carrick;  
     Freedman; Lasky; Porter; Sneve;  
     Tunnell; Williams, D.  
 Homelessness—stories: Sendak  
 Immigration: Ashabanner  
 Kwanzaa: Pinkney

Latinos—fiction: Pomerantz  
 Latinos—stories: Reiser; Soto  
 Literature, children's: Lasky  
 LOVE STORIES: Wittlinger  
 Manufacturing: Horenstein  
 Museums—stories: Mathers; Tunnell  
 Music and musicians—fiction: Hill  
 Native Americans: Sneve  
 Native Americans—stories: Bruchac  
 Nature study: Lerner  
 New York City—fiction: Avi  
 Nigeria—folklore: Bryan  
 Norway—stories: Emberley  
 NURSERY RHYMES: Sendak  
 Photography—fiction: LeMieux  
 Pioneer life: Bial; Lasky  
 POETRY: Gordon, R.; Myers  
 Prejudice—fiction: Mazer  
 Puerto Rico—fiction: Pomerantz  
 Rabbits—stories: Banks  
 Reading aloud: Banks; Uspensky  
 Reading, beginning: Pilkey;  
     Pomerantz  
 Reading, easy: Duffey; Porter;  
     Updike  
 Reading, family: Bruchac; Cutler;  
     Henkes; Miller, Margaret.;  
     Myers; Pinkney; Rattigan; Soto

Reading, reluctant: Avi; Gordon, J.;  
     Monroe  
 Religious education: Tolan  
 Russia—fiction: Uspensky  
 Russia—stories: Bernhard  
 SCARY STORIES: Butler; Gordon,  
     J.  
 SCHOOL STORIES: Duffey  
 School—stories: Stock; Tryon  
 SHORT STORIES: Gordon, J.  
 Sisters—fiction: Greene  
 Slavery—fiction: Porter  
 Social studies: Ashabanner; Kuklin  
 Sports: Littlefield  
 Story hour: Brett; Bryan; Cutler;  
     Emberley; Fox; Henkes; Hest;  
     Hodges; Honeycutt; Joyce;  
     Mathers; McPhail; Seymour;  
     Soto; Stock; Tryon; Yep  
 Storytelling: Bernhard  
 Suicide—fiction: LeMieux  
 Summer—fiction: Evans; Williams,  
     V.  
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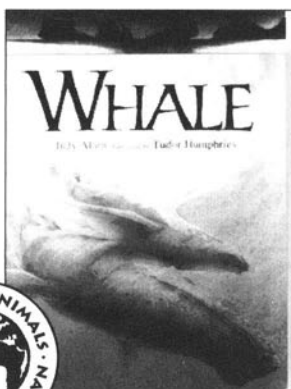
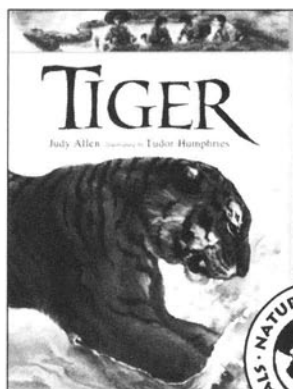
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